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ENGLISH A1 – HIGHER LEVEL – PAPER 1
ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU SUPÉRIEUR – ÉPREUVE 1
INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL SUPERIOR – PRUEBA 1

Friday 11 November 2005 (afternoon)
Vendredi 11 novembre 2005 (après-midi)
Viernes 11 de noviembre de 2005 (tarde)

2 hours / 2 heures / 2 horas

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire sur un seul des passages.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento.

Write a commentary on **one** of the following:

1. (a)

He got off at the next stop, and stood, looking up and down a country lane. He didn't know what to do at first, it was so long since he'd been anywhere alone. Raindrops dripped from the trees, big, splashy, persistent drops finding the warm place between his collar and neck. He looked up and down the lane again. Somewhere further along, a wood pigeon cooed monotonously. He
5 crossed over and began climbing the hill between the trees.

Up, up, until his way was barred by a fence whose wire twitched in the wind. A tuft of grey wool had caught on one of the barbs. Burns blinked the rain out of his eyes. He pressed two strands of wire apart and eased himself through, catching his sleeve, and breaking into a sweat as he struggled to free it.

10 Trembling now, he began to scramble along the edge of the ploughed field, slipping and stumbling, his mud-encumbered boots like lead weights pulling on the muscles of his thighs. His body was cold inside the stiff khaki, except for a burning round the knees where the tight cloth chafed the skin.

He was walking up the slope of a hill, tensing himself against the wind that seemed to be
15 trying to scrape him off its side. As he reached the crest, a fiercer gust snatched his breath. After that he kept his head bent, sometimes stopping to draw a deeper breath through the steeple of his cupped hands. Rain beat onto his head, dripping from the peak of his cap, the small bones of nose and jaw had started to sing. He stopped and looked across the field. The distance had vanished in a veil of rain. He didn't know where he was going, or why, but he ought to take shelter, and
20 began to run clumsily along the brow of a hill towards a distant clump of trees. The mud dragged at him, he had to slow to a walk. Every step was a separate effort, hauling his mud-clogged boots out of the sucking earth. His mind was incapable of making comparisons, but his aching thighs remembered, and he listened for the whine of shells.

When at last he reached the trees, he sat down with his back to the nearest, and for a while
25 did nothing at all, not even wipe away the drops of rain that gathered on the tip of his nose and dripped into his open mouth. Then, blinking, he dragged his wet sleeve across his face.

After a while he got to his feet and began stumbling, almost blindly, between the trees, catching his feet in clumps of bracken. Something brushed against his cheek, and he raised his hand to push it away. His fingers touched slime, and he snatched them back. He turned and saw
30 a dead mole, suspended, apparently, in air, its black fur spiked with blood, its small pink hands folded on its chest.

Looking up, he saw that the tree he stood under was laden with dead animals. Bore them like fruit. A whole branch of moles in various stages of decay, a ferret, a weasel, three magpies, a fox, the fox hanging quite close, its lips curled back from bloodied teeth.

35 He started to run, but the trees were against him. Branches clipped his face, twigs tore at him, roots tripped him. Once he was sent sprawling, though immediately he was up again, and running, his coat a mess of mud and dead leaves.

Out in the field, splashing along the flooded furrows, he heard Rivers's voice, as distinctly as he sometimes heard it in dreams: *If you run now, you'll never stop.*

40 He turned and went back, though he knew the voice was only a voice in his head, and that the
real Rivers might equally well have said: *Get away from here*. He stood again in front of the tree.
Now that he was calmer, he remembered that he had seen trees like this before. The animals were
not nailed to it, as they sometimes were, but tied, by wings or paws or tails. He started to release
45 a magpie, his teeth chattering as a wing came away in his hand. Then the other magpies, the fox,
the weasel, the ferret and the moles.

When all the corpses were on the ground, he arranged them in a circle round the tree and sat
down within it, his back against the trunk. He felt the roughness of the bark against his knobbly
spine. He pressed his hands between his knees and looked around the circle of his companions.
Now they could dissolve into the earth as they were meant to do.

Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (1993).

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1. (b)

Astronauts

Armored in oxygen,
 faceless in visors—
 mirrormasks reflecting
 the general glare and
 5 shadow of moonscape—
 they walk slowmotion
 floating the lifeless
 dust of Taurus
 Littrow¹. And Wow, they
 10 exclaim; oh boy, this is it.

They sing, exulting
 (though trained to be wary
 of “emotion and
 philosophy”), breaking
 15 the calcined² stillness
 of once Absolute Otherwhere.

Risking edges, earthlings
 to whom only
 their machines are friendly
 20 (and God’s radar-
 watching eye?), they
 labor at gathering
 proof of hypothesis;
 in snowshine of sunlight
 25 dangerous as radium
 probe detritus³ for clues.

What is it we wish them
 to find for us, as
 we watch them on our
 30 screens? They loom there
 heroic antiheroes,
 smaller than myth and
 poignantly human.
 Why are we troubled?
 35 What do we ask of these men?
 What do we ask of ourselves?

Robert Hayden

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¹ Taurus Littrow: name of a landing site on the moon

² calcined: heated to a point of oxidation

³ detritus: fragments from disintegration
